

The Communication of Sin:

A

SERMON

P R E A C H ' D at the

Affizes held at *D E R B Y,*

A U G U S T 15th 1709.

By *HENRY SACHEVERELL, D.D.*
Fellow of *Magdalen-College, Oxon,* and Chap-
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Publish'd at the Request of the Gentlemen of the
GRAND-JURY.

L O N D O N:

Printed for *HENRY CLEMENTS,* at the *Half-Moon*
in *St. Paul's Church-Yard, 1709.*



To the Right Worshipful
George Sacheverell, Esq;
High-Sheriff of the County of *DERBY*,

AND TO
The Honourable Gentlemen of the
GRAND-JURY.

Gilbert Thacker, Esq;
Robert Wilmot, Esq;
John Fitz-Herbert Esq;
John Beresford, Esq;
Henry Vernon, Esq;
William Cook, Esq;
William Cavendish Esq;
Francis Pole, Esq;

William Horton, Esq;
George Savill, Esq;
William Brown, Esq;
Paul Balledon, Esq;
James Chetham, Esq;
William Woolley, Esq;
George Turner, Gent.

QEA

o A

GENTLEMEN,

TH E Peculiar Honour you were
pleas'd to confer upon me after the de-
livery of this plain Discourse, was so
Signal, that nothing less than this Publick
Acknowledgment can acquit Me of Ingra-
titude.

Now, when the Principles, and Interests,
of our Church, and Constitution, are so
shamefully Betray'd, and Run Down, it can
be no little Comfort to all those who Wish
their Welfare and Security, to see, that notwithstanding the secret Malice, and Open Vi-
olence they are Persecuted with, there are still
to be found such Worthy Patrons of both,
who dare Own and Defend them as well a-
gainst the Rude and Presumptuous Insults of
the One Side, as the Base, Undermining
Treachery of the Other; and who Scorn to
fit

The Dedication.

sit Silently by, and Partake in the Sins of
these Associated Malignants.

Tho' the Truth seems to be so much For-saken at present, yet God be thank'd, they shall yet find to our Honour, that We have still amongst Us those who have Courage to Speak it, as well as those who have Lives and Fortunes to Maintain it: And tho' the Age is Sunk into the Lowest Dregs of Corruption, that it cannot endure Sound Doctrin, there are not wanting Some to Preach it, and Others to Support it, at the Expence of Both. May the Influence of your Good Examples, which as much Animates our Friends, as it Terrifies our Enemies, be as diffusively Prevailing, as 'tis nobly Conspicuous, and the Blessing of that Church attend you, which you so Eminently Adorn, and Sustain!

And, as I am oblig'd by the Relation I have the Honour to bear to your Family, may

The Dedication.

a double Portion of Divine Favour rest on You, (Mr. HIGH-SHERIFF) whose Commands I was very ready to Execute in this Office, since you thought neither the Advancement of your Years, so generously Expended for the Good of your Country, nor the great Trouble attending this Post, sufficient to exempt you, from shewing that steady Loyalty and Zeal to serve Her Majesty and the Government, for which you have been so remarkably Distinguish'd.

I am with all Regard, Gentlemen,

Your very Humble Servant,

HENRY SACHEVERELL.

The Description

of the following objects
in the Museum of
the Royal College of Surgeons
of England, London,
and the following descriptions
of them, will give some idea
of the extent of the collection
which is now nearly 100,000
specimens.

General Description

GENERAL INDEX

A

S E R M O N

P R E A C H ' D at the
Assizes at D E R B Y, &c.

i T I M. 5. *Part of the 22d. Verse.*

— — — *Neither be Partaker of other Men's Sins.*

W HEN St. Paul, by the peculiar Designation of the Holy Ghost, had Ordain'd *Timothy* Bishop of *Ephesus*, that he might not be wanting in sufficient Instructions for the Discharge of so Weighty and Sacred an Office, he sends him in this *Epistle* the *Credentials* of his *Authority*, with those *Rules of Government* for himself in his *Private Life*, together with those *Canons of Ecclesiastical Discipline*, which were absolutely necessary for the *Publick* due Administration of the *Church* of God. And to excite in him a full Sense of his Duty, and the great Danger of Neglecting or Abusing his *High-Calling*,

B

V. 21. Calling, the Apostle charges him before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Elect Angels, to consider that a double Burthen lay upon him, that he must answer for the Loss of all those other Souls committed to his Care at the Expence of his own; that he must be Responsible for their Guilt and Miscarriage, as his own proper Crimes; and that therefore he should act with all the strictest Vigilance and Circumspection in so momentous a Concern, and *lay hands suddenly on no Man*: Which, whether understood of *Absolution of Penitents*, by that Ancient and Primitive Ceremony us'd in it, (as some Writers contend) or of *Ordination*, (as others) would involve him in all the ill Consequences of such a Rash and Precipitate Action, and make him *Partaker of other Men's Sins*.

The Words however may be taken in an unrestrain'd Sense, as an excellent *Maxim* for the Conduct of Human Life in *General*; or as an Universal Prohibition of *Contributing* towards, *Concurring*, or *Complying* with, the wicked Practices of others, lest as we thereby become *Accomplices* in their *Iniquity*, we may be also *Sharers* in their *Guilt*, and *Fellow-Sufferers* in their *Punishment*. Under which unlimited Acceptation I shall proceed to discourse on the Text, and shall endeavour to shew,

I. First,

I. *First*, How many Ways we may be *Partakers of other Men's Sins*. And,

II. *Secondly*, I will urge some particular Motives to deter us from falling under so great and dangerous a Guilt.

I. And *First*, I will shew how many Ways we may be *Partakers of other Men's Sins*. In order to the stating this Point clearly, I must beg leave to premise this Reflection, That all *Immoral Actions* may be consider'd under a *double View*, and consequently *divided* into two Sorts. Either first, such as are *Internal*, and *Personal*; or secondly, such as are *External*, and *Derivative*. Now as the *First* are *confin'd within* the Offendor, and transacted only betwixt God and our Consciences; so they extend their Guilt no farther than *the Man*, and are circumscrib'd within the *Bounds of his own Soul*. These Sins are of a restrain'd, and *Positive* Nature, and to be *measur'd* by their *Essential*, and *Intrinsic Malignity* alone. But the *Others* have, besides this, a *Relative Addition* of Guilt, drawn from all the mischievous *Effects*, and wicked *Consequences* that flow from them; according to which they *rise in proportion* of Impiety, *increase* in the *Degrees of Heinousness*, and *Aggravation*, and still gather as they are fur-

ther propagated, and advanc'd. And as they are acted in Conjunction, in this *Communion*, and *Society of Vice*, (as I may call it) *it grows fruitful, and multiplies*; and tho' the Sin consider'd in itself may be *Single, and Uncompounded*, yet with respect to the *Multitude* engag'd in it, it may be also of a *Complicated Nature*, as it's communicated Influence is transfus'd thro' several different Channels, which may all spring out of, run into, and joyn in *One Individual Body*. According to which Notion, any *Criminal Action* may distinguish all those that are *Confederate* in it's Commission, into these three several *Classes*; either *first*, as they are *Principal Agents* in it; or *secondly*, as they are *Accessories* to it; or *thirdly*, as they are *Privy* to it's Execution, by a *Tacit Compliance* with it, *wilful Neglect* of it, or *Omission* to prevent it. All which are to be consider'd as so many *Gradations* of Sin, charging the different Transgressor with an *Higher*, or *Lower Imputation* of Guilt, as he stands delinquent in either. But to render this Matter more fully evident, I will draw out, and exemplify these *General Heads* in some of the most Important and *Particular Cases* contain'd under them, to which the rest may be easily reduc'd. We may therefore be *Partakers of other Men's Sins*, either by,

1. *Commanding, or Commissioning their Execution.*
2. *Conniving at, Consenting to, or Concealing them.*
3. *Administering Counsel, Direction, or Assistance towards them.*
4. *Commending, Approving, Excusing, or Defending them.*
5. *Giving Offence, or Scandalous Example.*
6. *Authorizing, Propagating, or Publishing any Heresy, False Doctrine, Schism, Faction, Irreligion, or Immorality.*

1. And First, We may partake of other Men's Sins, by Commanding, or Commissioning their Execution. This particularly respects all such as are invested with any Jurisdiction, or Authority over their Inferiors, all Princes and Magistrates, Civil and Ecclesiastical, Masters and Governors, Parents and Guardians, or any others that enjoy a Right of Dominion or Discipline, Granted and Establish'd by the Law, and a Preeminence requiring all Allegiance and Subjection to them in all things Just and Honest. Now tho' this Sovereignty is restrain'd within the Rules of Justice and Equity, of Reason and Religion, and no Power upon Earth can Authorize, Justifie or Excuse the Violation of them, there lying a Superior, Indefeasible Obligation that exempts all Men from an Illegal or Usurp'd Obedience; yet the controlling Sway, and overbearing

bearing Awe of Force and *Authority*, the affrighting and almost irresistible Terrors of *Threats* and *Punishments*, the dazzling *Glory* of *Wealth* and *Grandeur*, together with the persuasive Influence of *Interest* and *Ambition*, make great *Allowances* for Flesh and Blood, not easily capable in *itself*, without the merciful Asistances of *Divine Grace*, to struggle with, and vanquish such pressing Difficulties and Temptations; and therefore charge back a *double Portion* of *Guilt* upon those Persons who abuse their *Dominion* to base and sinful Purposes, who in *this Case* are to be consider'd as the *Principal Authors* of these Evils, as the *Prime Cause* and Original Ground-Spring from whence they flow. Not that this Reflection of a *Greater Degree* of Guilt upon the *Commander*, can wholly *acquit* the *Subordinate Tran'sactor* of his, who knows he is Responsible to a much *Greater Master* and *Sovereign*. He must *share* his *Proportion*, and bear *his own Burden*, tho' of much *less Weight* than that of his *Superior*. It is observable that the *Roman Law* inclin'd very much in favour to such unhappy Persons as lay under these Disadvantages of *Power* and *Obligations*, whereby they were obnoxious to be compell'd to execute, or comply with any Injunction that might contradict their *Conscience*, or interfere with their *Justice* and *Integrity*, imputing the Offence *chiefly* to those under whose *Government* they acted as the adequate

quate and *Impulsive Cause* of the Crime, and true Object of the *Penalty*; esteeming the *Immediate Delinquents* to be properly *non sui Juris*, or capable *Judges* in the Case, and therefore not so much the *Authors* of Iniquity, as meer *Passive Machines*, directed by the Hands of Despotick and Overruling Managers. As doubtless the Strength of the *Temptation*, the Prevalence of *Inducements*, and the Want of *Liberty*, do very much *Extenuate* the Transgression in the *One*, so must it *proportionably Aggravate* that in the *Other*, in Perverting and Prostituting that Authority and *Sacred Trust* that was repos'd in him for the Promotion of *Virtue* and *Piety*, to the scandalous Propagation of *Vice* and *Debauchery*. Upon which Reasons are founded those several *Maxims* of the Civil *Law*, that *Exempt* all those that act under a *Command* from the *Guilt* of the *Offence*. And on the same account we find in the *Scriptures* many Instances of very flagrant Sins, committed by some *Ministers of State*, ascrib'd only to the *Supream Power*, under whose *Commission* they acted. A very Convincing Example whereof we read in the dismal Case of *Uriah*, whose Execrable Murther, tho' transacted by *Joab* thro' *David's Order*, was not only charg'd upon the King *himself*, in his own Words in his *Penitential Psalm* compos'd on that lamentable Occasion, but by the *Holy Ghost* also in the 2d. of *Samuel*, *Thou hast*

12. 9. *hast kill'd Uriah the Hittite with the Sword, and hast slain him with the Sword of the Children of Ammon.* Tho' doubtless his Subjects were Guilty of a very heinous Sin, in Obeying their Sovereign's impious Command; yet did God visit that abominable and ungrateful Fact upon the Prince's Head, in a Punishment that wore the Colour of his Crime, and branded his otherwise spotless Character with a Bloody Mark to all Posterity. And so was the Parallel Murther of *Naboth* both Ascrib'd to, and Expiated in the Persons of *Abab* and *Fezabel*, who remain upon Record as Frightful and Infamous Examples of abus'd Power, Avarice and Usurpation. Where Princes thus presume to force the Consciences of their Subjects, and break in upon their Rights and Laws, not only their Private and Personal, but the Publick and National Crimes will be requir'd at their Hands; and for this reason the Idolatry of the Jews is charg'd upon *Feroboam*, for which the Spirit of God has stigmatiz'd his Pedigree to Eternity, in that Odious and Reproachful Character of being *the Son of Nebat that made Israel to sin.* When *Aaron* had so far submitted to the impions Request of the People as to Dethrone their God and Sovereign, and change their Glory into the Similitude of a Calf that eateth Hay, we find *Moses* accusing the High-Priest of their Rebellion and Idolatry, in this sharp Expostulation,

What

What did this People unto thee, that thou hast *Exod.*
brought so great a Sin upon them? The same Rea- ^{32. 31.}
son will be found to hold good in all Cases of
Government, and *Authority*, which in the very
lowest Degree are Offices of *Commission*, and *Trust*,
lodg'd as the *Delegacy*, and *Vice-Gerency* of God,
the Fountain of all Power, in the Hands of *Magi-*
strates, and *Superiors*, who stand accountable to
him for the Crimes of their *Inferiors*, in which
they are *Partakers*, and consequently will bear
the Load of a *double Damnation*, when the Souls
that are lost thro' their *Misconduct* are requir'd
at their Hands.

II. Secondly, We may be *Partakers* of other Men's
Sins, by *Conniving at*, *Consenting to*, or *Concealing*
them. Now the Guilt in this Particular rises in
proportion to the *Power*, and *Obligation*, that dif-
ferently binds, or engages Men, according to the
Variety of their *Circumstances*, and *Stations*, to
prevent Vice, and *Injustice*. By that Rule is to
be measur'd the *Bulk*, and *Extent* of the Sin; for
where a Man has no *Power*, *Jurisdiction*, or *Obli-*
gation to exert that *Power*, there can be no *Com-*
munication of the Action: But where we are
invested in such *Authority*, as in the Case of all
Publick Offices, and *Administrations*, or where the
Precepts of *Humanity*, *Civil Justice* or *Religion*
require us to interpose, and restrain the Com-

mision of any vicious Act, either thro' Carelessness, and Negligence, Partiality, or Impunity in the One, Connivance, Consent, or Concealment in the Other, they both become Partakers of the Crimes committed, in an unfaithful Discharge of their Duties, and a *Tacit Violation* of their Trust, and are not only Responsible for the present *Acts* alone, but also for all the mischievous Consequences attending them. For *vicious Customs* steal upon us gradually, and by every fresh Advancement get Ground and Strength, till at last by many multiply'd *Acts* they establish themselves, grow Head-strong, Irresistible, and out of the reach of *Controll* or *Correction*, which the least *Discipline* seasonably apply'd to, in a State of Infirmitiy, had check'd and suppress'd in their very Birth. *Errors* in *Practice* being like *Absurdities* in *Reasoning*, the Admission of One Fallacy will draw a Thousand after it. Neglect, and want of *Animadversion*, make Delinquents Bold and Impudent, and will bring 'em from *Extenuating*, to *Justifying* their Faults.

A *Tacit Admission* in any One that has the *Right of Prohibition*, amounts to an *Approbation* of any thing in the Sense of the whole World, and involves the Person so *Consenting* under a *double Guilt*, both as being a *Party concern'd* in the Sin, and as a *Traitor* of his Authority. *Silence*, where a Man ought to speak, is as Culpa-
ble,

ble, if not more than, an *Actual*, and open *Engagement*. *These things hast thou done, and I held my Tongue, and thou thoughtest that I was even such an one as thyself*, says the *Psalmist*, and the Natural Inference most Men are apt to draw from the *Cowardly Compliance*, and base Obsequiousness of such as ought to shew their *Power*, and *Principles* to the contrary. He that does not appear in opposition to that which it is his Duty to prevent, or suppress, must at the least justly be concluded not to be *against* it, according to that *Aphorism* of our *Blessed Saviour*, *He that is not against us, is on our part*, Mar. 9. which indeed may bear^{40.} a farther Interpretation, that the Man that acts not evidently *against* any *Party*, or *Design*, is a real *Promoter*, or *Encourager* of it's Interests. For certainly any Person in *Authority* does much more contribute to the *Advancement* of Evil by a *Permissive Silence*, and *Passive Forbearance*, than any *Inferior* can in the most vigorous Expression of his *Zeal*, and *Fervency* for it; because by him Vice seems to be *Legitimated*, as 'twere *Establish'd by a Law*, and to have its currant *Passport* without Controll in the World. Thus does He that *Acquiesces in*, *Submits to*, or *Winks at* a Crime that by his *Post* and *Power* he is qualify'd to *Forbid*, *Prevent*, *Redress*, or *Correct*, become *positively Guilty* of that very Crime himself, as much as if he had been the *Single, and Personal Aggressor*.

Both the *Old*, and *New Testament* abounding with pregnant Examples for the Proof of this Assertion, I shall trouble you with but two drawn out of each, which speak very home to the purpose. The First is that Remarkable, and Notorious Case of old *Eli*, under the joyn^t Consideration both of a *Parent*, and *Magistrate*.

^{1 Sam. 2.} He, ^{20, &c.} like a too Indulgent *Father*, and *Governor*, conniv'd at the abominable Transgressions of the *Priests* his *Sons*, who, by turning the very *Temple* into a *Brothel-House*, had made the Sacrifice of the Lord to stink, and his Service Detestable in the sight of the People; and when he ought to have Purg'd the *Church* of such *Sanctify'd Vil-lainy*, and Executed the severest Punishments that Justice could inflict upon such Hellish Crimes, and as 'twere to have *Reconcil'd* God to his *Altar*, by the Effusion of his own *Guilty Blood* upon it, he could not find in his Heart to give them so much as a Rebuke, till the Clamours, and Outcries of the People forc'd him to that Ungrateful Office. And even then too his Corrections were so Soft, and Gentle, so full of silly Fondness, and Dotage, that they rather *Encourag'd*, than *Restrain'd* their Odious Impieties. High time was it for *God* to *awake*, when his Listless Yawning Vice-Gerent was thus scandalously *Drowsy*, to vindicate that crying *Reproach* he had brought upon his *Worship*, and *Honour* by such Supine

Supine Oscitancy, Sloth and Negligence. Accordingly we find God charging all these monstrous Sins upon the *Old Prophet*, with the highest Exprobation of the blackest *Ingratitude*, and *Injustice*, spurning the useless and unworthy *Datard* out of his Office, and executing Vengeance upon him, and his whole Posterity, with the utmost Indignation and Disdain.

§. The other Instance we have Recorded by St. Paul, in his First *Epistle* to the *Corinthians*, c. 5. wherein he very sharply charges his new Converts as *Partakers* in the toul Sin of the *Incestuous* Person, because they *Conniv'd* at it, and did not positively proceed to Execute the *Church-Censures* upon him, in totally cutting off such a Corrupt and Rotten Member from it's Body. *Ye are puff'd up*, (says he) *and have not rather mourn'd*, that *he that hath done this Deed might be taken away from among you*. For the Understanding whereof, we must observe that in the *Primitive Ages of Christianity*, Excommunication denoted by these Expressions, ἐξαιρόντες ἐκ μέσου ὑμῶν, and ἀβογεῖσθαι τὸν Σαλαρά, being never us'd, but on very great and enormous Occasions, and being justly esteem'd of such a Dreadful and Damnable Consequence, was always attended with the sad Pomp, and mournful Solemnities of a *Funeral*; the *Congregation* were array'd in *Black*, accompanying the *Execution* with Lamentation, and loud Weeping, as o'er

the

the Spiritual Death of the Criminal's Soul. So that the *Apostle* here expostulates with the *Corinthians*, as *Encouraging*, and *Sharing* in the Vice, in Omitting to Punish it, tho' in such a Severe and Desperate way, wherein *Mercy*, and *Compassion* might be allow'd to take place, if in any Case in the World.

Thus the *Toleration* of any Sin in *Others* by Persons of *Power*, and *Authority*, *Translates* it back on their *own Heads*, and renders them *actually* Guilty of it. This Assertion must be allow'd Evident and Undeniable in all Instances of *Government*; but then there arises a fresh Question, How far we may be *Partakers of other Men's Sins* in the *private* Intercourse and Affairs of Human Life *betwixt Man and Man*, in Common Conversation? We are certainly oblig'd in *Charity* to bear always an hearty and tender Concern

Heb. 10. for our Neighbour's Good and Safety, *to con-*

24. Phil. 2. *sider one another, to look not every Man on his own*

4. *things, but every Man also to the things of others; to*

Rom. 14. *Edify one another, to Advise, Warn, Rebuke, and*

19. &c. *by all other Methods to Promote his Welfare as Occasion serves, or we have opportunity of Maintaining and Propagating the great Interest of Truth, Piety, and Virtue in the World. But on the other hand, do not the same express Injunctions of *Charity*, *Religion*, and *Justice* oblige us with equal Force, and Penalty, to the no less*

neces-

necessary Duties of *Peace*, and *Quietness*, *Forbearance*, and *Forgiveness*, in Mercy, Compassion, and Good-Nature to *Cover*, and *Conceal* our Brother's Sins, and Infirmitie? Do not these as strictly command us not to thrust ourselves *Pragmatically* into his Business, or meddle with those Concerns that do not belong to us, or under the *Sanctify'd Pretence of Reformation of Manners*, to turn *Informer*, assume an *Odious* and *Faction* Office, arrogantly intrench upon Other's *Christian Liberty*, and Innocence, and under the Shew of more *Zeal*, and *Purity*, (the most infallible Token of a *Dextrous* and *Refin'd Hypocrite*, and *Knave*) turn the World upside down, and set all Mankind into Quarrels, and Confusions? Now to Reconcile these Differences, and to Steer our Course even between the Limits of *Duty* and *Error*, which indeed is not so easy a Matter precisely in all Instances to do, these three *Conclusions* may help to *solve* most of the Difficulties in the Case before us.

1. *First*, We may be *Partakers of other Men's Sins*, if we do not endeavour to the utmost of our Power to *prevent*, or stop their Commission, when they openly break in upon *Religion*, or assault the *Glory of God*. In this Case we lie under a *Double Obligation* to interpose, in Vindication of the *Divine Honour*, and for the *Eternal Salvation* of our *Brother*; both which ought to be
more

more Dear to us, than any other Considerations in the World. When we hear God's Holy and Dreadful Name *Blasphem'd*, his *Being Deny'd*, his *Providence Arraign'd*, his *Goodness Censur'd*, his *Power Contemn'd*, his *Justice Question'd*, his *Mercy Mock'd*, or the *Sacred Mysteries* of our *Faith Vili-fy'd* or *Ridicul'd*, not to stand up in their Defence, and with all the *Courage*, *Authority*, and *Argument* we are Masters of, to assert the Glorious Cause of *God*, and *Truth*, is to *Renounce* our *Allegiance to One*, and *Pretensions* to the *Other*. In such base, and cowardly *Disloyalty* to *God*, *Silence* and *Con-nivance* make us *Actual Aggressors*; not to *Speak*, is to *Approve*; not to *Act*, is to *Commit*; not to *Rebuke*, is to *Consent* to; not to shew our *Dis-plea-sure* against, is to have *Complacency* in it, not to *Resent*, is to *Submit* to it; not to endeavour to *Destroy*, is to *Promote*, the *Kingdom of the Devil*, and to *Side* with the *Powers of Darkness*. There is no *Trimming Moderation* in this Case, no standing in a *Neutrality* and *Indifference*, we must be *Offensive*, or *Defensive*, and *serve God, or Belial*. This is a *Negative Denial of God*, (if I may so speak) and communicates a deep Share of the *Guilt*; but how much greater then does a *Posi-tive* derive? When Men out of a Time-serving *Fear*, *Sycophantizing Flattery*, or Mistaken *Com-plaisance*, shall fall in with the Damnable *Humours*, or *Debauch'd Opinions* of Lewd Sots, and *Atheists*,

smile

smile at their Smutty, and Prophane *Fests*, tamely hear those *Holy Oracles*, by which we expect to be sav'd, Scoff'd at, and Derided, and impudently Criticis'd upon, and give an *approving Laugh* to that *Execrable Drollery*, for which the Speaker's Tongue ought to be cut out, lest they should displease a *Crew* of Ignorant and Profligate *Infidels*, by shewing *unseasonably* before *Brutes* and *Buffoons*, that they themselves are *Men*, that is, Creatures endu'd with Reason, and Reflection, that are not ashamed of the *God* that made them, and have so much Gratitude as to Own and Vindicate the *Saviour* that *Redeem'd* them. Not to Rebuke such Daring Impieties, (which fly in the Face of Heaven, and call aloud for speedy Vengeance, for *Thunder* and *Earthquakes* to *Blast* and *Swallow* such accursed Miscreants, who thus provoke, and as 'twere anticipate their Damnation) notwithstanding the most powerful and dangerous Oppositions in the World, is, in *Eph. 5.* the Apostle's Language, *to have Fellowship with the ^{11.} Works of Darkness*, to associate with *Devils Incarnate*, and to enter into a *Covenant with Death*, and ^{18.} an *Agreement with Hell*, as the Prophet elegantly speaks, which such treacherous *Apostates* to their Religion, will at last, to their Eternal Sorrow, find their just Reward hereafter.

2. *Secondly*, We may be *Partakers of other Men's Sins*, if we do not to the utmost of our Power endeavour to *prevent*, or *obstruct* their

Commission, when they manifestly endanger the Good of the Publick. As we are Members of any Government, or Society, we are All oblig'd, in point of Honour, Interest, and Conscience, to Maintain it's Security, Promote it's Welfare, and Guard it against any Factious Designs, or Seditious Conspiracies, that may Threaten it's Constitution, Discompose it's Peace, or Violate, and Subvert it's Laws. God, and Nature, has invested every Subject from his Cradle with a Commission to Engage, Discover, and Disappoint the Enemies of his Church, and Country; and he that is either Privy to, industriously Conceals, or any ways Abetts, their Schismatical, Illegal, or Rebellious Enterprizes, both in the Eyes of Human, as well as Divine Laws, is an Accomplice, and Partaker in the Guilt, a Traitor to God, and his Prince, a Patron, and Protector of Injustice, and a Common Adversary to Himself, as well as all Mankind.

3. Thirdly, We may partake in other Men's Sins, by Conniving at, or Consenting to, any imminent Danger, or great Injury, that may violently affect the Body, or Soul, the Life, or Estate, Spiritual, or Temporal, of our Neighbour. Where these visibly lie at stake, they demand our Succours, and Common Humanity interests us in their Defence. Where his Innocent Reputation is scandalously Aspers'd, his naked Person openly Assaulted, or Assassinated, his Fortune secretly Struck at, or Undermin'd,

dermin'd, every Man is bound to follow the Example of that *Heroic Champion*, and Deliverer of his Country-men, *Moses*, who, tho' endow'd with such an *Unparellell'd Meekness*, as nothing but such an heinous Provocation could disturb, *Seeing one of his Brethren suffering wrong, Defended Aet. 7. him, and Aveng'd him that was oppress'd, and smote*^{24.} *the Egyptian.* Otherwise we lie obnoxious to the Imputation of the *Psalmist*, *When thou sawest Psal. 50. a Thief, thou consentedst unto him, and hast been*^{18.} *Partaker with the Adulterers.* He must at least be suppos'd a *Well-wisher* to the Villainy, that can behold it's Commission without *Compassion*, and *Resentment*. St. Paul's meer standing by, and *holding the Garments* of St. Stephen's Executioners, was enough to have *Attainted* the *Apostle*, and render'd him Guilty of the *Martyr's Blood*. Now if barely viewing the Perpetration of a *Corporal Crime* in Others, when we can *obstruct* it, may make us *Malefactors* ourselves, certainly the *Permission* of a *Spiritual* much more, as 'tis of a more dreadful Consequence to the *Better Part of Man*. To prevent which, we are oblig'd to interpose with the most *Fraternal Concern*, gentle *Admonition*, tender *Reproof*, kind *Advice*, and insinuating *Persuasion*, still with a cautious and due Consideration of *Time*, of *Place*, and of *Person*. But if these *Friendly Overtures* cannot prevail, we have *wash'd our Hands* of the Guilt, and stand

Acquitted before God, and our Conscience ; but without them, we are positively said even in the *Mosaic Law*, to suffer Sin upon him, and consequently liable to partake of the Penalty. But however we must strictly observe, that these Duties are always confin'd to Overt *Acts*, and *Visible Cases*; for Religion has left in this Matter a wide Room for the right Exercise of our Prudence, and Discretion; for it does not oblige us to charge Men at random, upon bare *Surmise*, and *Suspicion*, or to pry officiously into their *Lives*, and *secret Affairs*, and to invade their private Rights by usurping a *Jurisdiction*, which we have no Title to justify, or with a rude Air of Superiority, to obtrude ourselves upon 'em as *Privy-Councillors*, and *Dogmatically Censure*, *Rebuke*, or *Advise* in our Neighbour's Proceedings, that don't belong to us, neither lie under the Verge of our Cognizance. Whatever Godly, and fallacious *Glosses* such troublesome *Wasps*, that erect themselves into *Illegal Inquisitions*, may cast upon their Actions, they are doubtless the unwarrantable Effects of an Idle, Incroaching, Impertinent, and *Medling Curiosity*, a Vice as contrary to the true, Generous Spirit of Christianity, as 'tis to *Good-Manners*, and *Justice*. It is in short the base Product of *Ill-Nature*, *Spiritual Pride*, *Censoriousness*, and *Sanctify'd Spleen*, pretending to carry on the Blessed Work of *Reformation* by *Lying*, *Slan-*

Slander, Whispering, Backbiting, and Tale-bearing, the most express Character of the Devil, who is Emphatically styl'd the *Grand Accuser of the Brethren*. No wonder therefore that St. Paul has so severely stigmatiz'd these *Busie-bodies in other Men's Matters*, these Ἀλλοτεμποκοποι that presume to exercise the Office, and Discipline of a Bishop in other Men's Provinces (as the Original may be render'd) whom he justly ranks with *Murtherers*,^{1 Pet 4.} *Thieves*, and *Malefactors*, as the most proper Persons to keep one another Company.^{15.}

III. I come now to the *Third General Head* propos'd, namely, that *We may partake in other Men's Sins*, by *administering Counsel, Direction, or Assistance towards them*. It is almost impossible that any *Great Act* of Villainy should be carry'd on, and accomplish'd by any *One Single Person*; there must be *Cooperators, Partners, and Under-workers* in it, who, like the several *Actors* in a well-form'd *Tragedy*, must contribute their various *Parts* to the *main Body* of the *Action*, and all *Conspire, and Unite* in the *Fatal Catastrophe*. Few Men, tho' of the most exalted *Genius, Reach, and Depth*, have in *themselves*, either *Heads, or Hearts sufficient, Power, Conduct, or Policy*, to *Contrive, Manage, and Complete* an *Elaborate, and Consummate Piece of Sin*, a *Sin of Bulk, Figure, and Extent*: there must be many *Hands employ'd, many*.

many Confederates let into, and trusted with the Secret, any One whereof *Miscarrying*, may endanger the Best-projected Plot in Nature. Therefore the Grand Deceiver of Mankind is careful to pick out his Privy-Council, Men of shrewd Dexterity, and Cunning, well vers'd in all his Artificial Wiles, and subtle Stratagems, that with fair Countenances, and smooth Tongues, can Hypocritically Blanch, and Palliate the most Odious, and Deform'd Iniquities, and slyly insinuate them into the Weak and Undiscerning. *Absalom* must have his *Achitophel*, *Job* his *Bosom-Serpent*, his Wife, *Judas* his *Sanhedrim*; that under the sacred, and endearing Pretence of Friendship, for the Gratification of their Ambition, Pleasure, or Avarice, must persuade the One to Rebel, entice the Other to Renounce his God, and Bribe the Third to Betray his very Saviour. Now certainly these Agents, and Sollicitors in the Devil's Cause, who Advise, Direct, or Promote it, are to be consider'd not only as the Allies, but as principal Sharers in the Sin, whether they bring about their Designs by skilfully applying to the Humours, Affections, or Interests of the Person Betray'd, or by Importunity, and the winning Charms of Address, enforc'd by proper Arguments, Objects, and Occasions to Catch, and Insnare an Unguarded Heart. Nay further, He that thus Inveigles any Person, and Seduces him against the Reluctance of his Conscience, by

Menaces,

Menaces, or Sollicitations, must be concluded under a deeper Imputation of Guilt, than the very Actor himself, as those Words of our Saviour seem positively to infer, as 'twere a little in Excuse of that Corrupt, and Self-condemn'd Judge, Pontius Pilate, overborn by the Clamours, and Outrage of the tumultuous Jews, into the most Villainous, most Execrable Sentence, upon the Justest, and Innocentest Person in the World, even against all Convictions of the most undeniable Truth, and Reason. He that deliver'd me nnto thee, hath the Job. 19: greater Sin, which does assert the Traytor more a Son of Perdition, than the False Condemner himself. So highly are we oblig'd in the Words of Jacob to beseech God to keep us free from any Communion with these Instruments of Cruelty, O my Soul, Gen. 49: come not thou into their secret, unto their Assembly 5, 6. mine Honour be not thou united. Now if bare Counsel, or Assistance can Entitle us to any Sin before its Commission, certainly,

IV. Fourthly, We may also become *Partakers of it, in Commending, Approving, Excusing, or Defending it afterwards.* In this Case a Man contracts the Guilt of a *Prior Action*, he sins by *Precedent*, and derives *Another's Transgression upon Himself* by his *Affsent* to it. These are the *Patrons, and Advocates of Satan's Court*, who tho' they dare not *Personally appear in the Crime*, yet are

are his faithful Friends in the *Justification* of it. We may frequently observe many of the Crafty, Time-serving *Politicians* of this World, to act always in *Publick* on the *Reserve*, and never to declare their *Opinions*, and *Principles*, to keep Mankind in *suspense*, and hold their Adversaries at a *parry*, but never fail to fall in with the *Party*, and close with the *Victorious* side, when their Interest lies sure, and open. They are content till that, to *act behind the Curtain*, see Others expos'd to Difficulties, and Dangers, and draw the *Tools* in with *Flattering Panegyricks*, that they may reap the Fruit of their Labours. Such Men are as much in their *Thoughts*, and *Imaginations* engag'd in the Sin, however they may fancy themselves Secure, and Innocent, in this miserable *Salvo*, of not being *Actual*, and *Direct Aggressors* in it. Tho' it must be confess'd to be impossible for any one to do as much with his *Heart*, and *Inclinations*, as he can with his *Hand*, and *Purse*, yet considering the *Cause* which may restrain him, which perhaps is only *Cowardice*, *Fear of Success*, or *Want of Opportunity*, he may become *Partaker* of the Guilt, by the malicious *Intentions* of his Mind, and the *Depravation* of his *Will*, by which the *Malignity* of any *Crime* is to be measur'd, and God will judge us at the *Last Day*. The *Scribe's*, and *Pharisee's* Hypocritical Profession of their Innocency, was not sufficient to exempt

empt them from the Imputation of their Fore-father's *Murder*, and *Sacrilege*, whilst they retain'd, and abetted their *Principles*, upon which that severe Woe is denounc'd upon them, Because ye build the *Tombs of the Prophets*, and garnish ^{Mat. 23.} the *Sepulchres of the Righteous*, and say, if we had ^{29, &c.} been in the Days of our Fathers, we would not have been Partakers with them in the Blood of the Prophets. Wherefore ye be *Witnesses unto yourselves* that ye are the Children of them which kill'd the Prophets. Fill ye up then the *Measure of your Fathers*, ye Serpents, ye Generation of Vipers, how can ye escape the Damnation of Hell? If therefore we may thus by the secret *Approbation* of our *Judgment* of any *Crime* contract it's *Guilt*, certainly much more by *Commending*, *Excusing*, *Extenuating*, or *Defending* it, which not only *Justifies* Evil, but *Encourages*, and *Confirms* Men in the Practice of it; and has so much more Malignity in it's Nature, in that neither *Temptation*, or *Infirmity* can be pleaded in it's behalf. Nay farther, St John asserts, that the very *Wish* of Success towards it, can render the Speaker an *Accomplice*. If there come any unto you ^{Eph. 2.} (says he) and bring not this Doctrin, Receive him ^{10, 11.} not into your House, neither bid him God-speed; For he that biddeth him God-speed, is Partaker of his evil Deeds. Where we see that even a bare *Entertainment*, *Civil Salutation*, or a Flattering *Compliment* bestow'd upon any Person, relating to the *Vices*,

or *Errors* wherein he is engag'd, *Actually* makes them *Ours*, and derives the same Guilt on our own Heads. St. Paul carries this *Critical Case of Conscience* even yet to an higher Extremity, and tells us, that a meer *Complacency in Other's Sin*, *Appropriates* it to Us. For in his *Epistle to the Romans.* c. 1. after having recounted the most horrible Catalogue of Sins, that Human Nature can be Guilty of in the utmost State of *Corruption*, he concludes all with that *Superlative Degree* of it, that *Last finishing Stroke*, and (if I may be allow'd so to speak) *Hyperbole* of *Iniquity*, in this *Consummate*, and Dreadful Character, *Who knowing*
¶ *the Judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of Death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.* Thus a Man, by a Grateful *Reflection* upon, and a Wilful *Propensity* to Vice, may be Guilty of all the *Mischief*, and *Calamity*, all the *Villainy*, and *Debauchery* that was ever committed by Mankind; and by the Help of a *Lively Memory*, and a *Lewd Imagination*, Spiritually act over all the most Flagitious, and Heinous Impieties, that the Soul is capable of *Representing*, the Devil of *Suggesting*, and the United *Annals of Historians Recording*. He may be the very *Reverse* of his *Blessed Saviour* (of whom he so desperately stands in need) not only *Bear*, but be positively *Guilty* of, the *Sins of the whole World*. Thus we may partake of Other Men's *Crimes*, by a *Phantastical Delight* in them. V.

V. Fifthly, *We may partake in other Men's Sins, by giving Offence, or scandalous Example.* As Men are *Members of Society*, they stand *Responsible* not only for the *Positive Legality* of their Actions, as consider'd in *themselves*, and their own *Natures*, solely with respect to the *Subject-Matter* of them, but also for their *Relative Consequences*, as they may affect the *Consciences* of Others, to which we are bound by the *Laws of Charity* to give no *Violation, Disturbance, or Occasion of Transgressing*; and in all our *Deportment* to consult not only it's *Lawfulness*, but it's *Decency*, and *Expediency*, with regard to our *Brethren*, against whom we may *Sin* (as St. Paul says, in the admirable *State* of this *Case*, 1 Cor. 8. 10.) and wound their weak *Consciences, and sin against Christ.* Thus the *Abuse* even of an *Innocent Liberty* cannot be *Justify'd* by a *good Intention*, and we are liable to Answer for the *Fall* of those to whom we become a *Stumbling-block*, and a *Rock of Offence*. And if we are thus *Obnoxious* for the *Consequences* of even our *Lawful Actions*, how much higher will the *Obligation* rise in the *Ill Effects* of those that are really in *themselves Unlawful?* Here we propagate our *Malignity*, spread our *Infection* like a *Walking Pestilence*, communicate our *Poysnous Influence* to all about us, and transgress as 'twere by *Proxy*. *Number, and Example* carry a much more *Controlling Evidence*,

than the *Demonstrations of Reason*, and *Argument*. For these are visible to the Eye, and strike quicker, and deeper, upon the *Imagination*, than *Principles*, and *Speculations* upon the Understanding ; which is *deceiv'd*, and hurry'd away with a Desire of Imitation, and is apt to deduce, and frame *Rules by Examples*, instead of *Examples by Rules*; especially where they fall in with the corrupted Inclinations of Nature, and have the Advantage of being well Recommended, they scarce fail to shock the most *constant Virtue*, to confirm those that are already in a vicious Course, and *pervert weak*, and unstable Persons into *Sin* and *Error*, who have not their *Senses exercis'd*, to discern betwixt *Good*, and *Evil*. And thus, whether we follow, or lead Others, we both ways become *Partakers of their Sins*. In the first Case the *Temptation* is very strong, and without God's preventing Grace almost Irresistible : For a Man must have a steady *Governement over Himself*, and his *Passions*, together with an *Inflexible Eye* fixt on his *Duty*, and an unshaken *Contempt of the World*, and it's *Flatteries*, and *Censures*, he must be *stanch* in his *Resolutions*, and *Master of his Conduct*, neither to be corrupted by *Shame*, *Hopes*, or *Fears*, that is not born down in a *Throng*, and sunk in the *Tide of Popular Authority*. For when once *Vice* gets into *Fashion*, it makes *Religion* look *Singular*, and *Uncreditable*. On the other hand, let but a *Man of Figure*, and

Cha-

Character, of Interest, and Quality, lead the way, how many implicit, and fawning Proselytes will follow the Temporizing Courtier, like Beasts in a Track, with a resign'd Understanding to give up their Creed, abandon their Old Friends, with their unprofitable Principles, Care's their most Implacable Enemies, and Betray, and Sacrifice both Church, and State to their insatiable Lust, Pride, Avarice, and Ambition! Such a Man, like Lucifer, must Fall with, and Damn his Legions, and like him too, be accountable for all the Villainy, Treachery, and Rebellion, into which his Hellish Example seduc'd them.

VI. *Lastly, We may be Partakers of other Men's Sins, by Authorizing, Propagating, or Publishing any Heresy, False Doctrin, Schism, Faction, Irreligion, or Immorality. For these Corrupt, and Debauch Men's Minds; and consequently Influence, and Pervert their Lives. For 'tis very rarely seen, that wicked Principles lie still, and dormant in the Conscience, and not exert, and shew themselves in Action: And he that lays the Poyson is the Cause of his Death who swallows it. He that puts a Cheat, and Lye upon Another, leads him Hoodwinkt into Falshood, and Mistake; and when once a Man is got into Error, he goes Headlong, and Blindfold into Perdition. There is a strange Infatuation, and as 'twere sort of Witchcraft in False Doctrin,*

Doctrin, that unaccountably besots, and stupifies the Reason; and scarce was there ever any Broach'd, however Impious, or Absurd, but found some Patrons, and Proselytes, to Believe, and Maintain it. Are not therefore all the vile Enormities, that are the Natural Product of Wild, Licentious, and Enthusiaſtick Opinions, to be charg'd back upon the Original Author, in whom they must all Center, and Conterminate, as in that Root of Bitterness from whence they sprung? Heterodoxy, and Blasphemy, Lewdness, and Prophaneness, are of such a Black, and Frightful Complexion in themselves, that represented in their Native Deformity, they would gain few Votaries in the World: Therefore these Spiritual Pandars in Iniquity cover the odious Monster with Artificial Guises, and Dissembl'd Colours, to make it look Amiable, and Engaging. And when Sophistry, and False Wit cloath the Fallacy, they easily Seduce, and Beguile the Ignorant, and Vicious; and Men are oftentimes tempted to swallow that Diet for the Sauce, which they would otherwise Loath, and Nauseate. When the Directors of Men's Consciences turn Impostors, and Betray, and Mislead them into those Sins they should teach them to avoid, such Pernicious Infidelity to their Sacred Office, ought justly to Entitle them, to all those repeated Woes, denounc'd by God and Christ against those False Prophets, and Pharisaical Doctors, who per-

perverted the *Divine Law*, and made even the *Blessed Word of God*, the sad Instrument of *Damnation* to Mankind.

Thus in all these *Instances*, we see there is an *Union*, or as 'twere *Confederacy* in Vice, *it joyns hand in hand*, and draws out into *Leagues*, and *Combinations*; it's *Contagion* spreads like a *Leprosy*; there's no *Breathing* in it's *Air* with *Safety*; we cannot look on it without endangering our *Health*, and *Innocence*, nor touch it without *Uncleanness*, and *Pollution*. In all these *Cases* there is a *Communication* of *Guilt* both *Backward*, and *Forward*, whereby we become *Partakers* of Other Men's *Sins*. In the *Commander*, *Parent*, or *Governor*, it *Recoils* upon the *Person* in *Authority*, basely *Abusing* his *Power*, *Prostituting* the *Vice-Gerency* of *God* to execrable Purposes, *Betraying* his *Sacred Trust*, and *Commission*, and *Violating* his *Faith*, and *Honour*. In *Conniving* at, *Consenting* to, or *Concealing* those *Impieties*, we ought to *Punish*, *Prevent*, or *Restrain*, we are positively *Accessory* to their *Commission*, by a *Tacit Approbation*, and a *Conscious*, and *Cowardly Forbearance*. By administering *Counsel*, *Direction*, or *Assistance* towards them, we act the Part of the *Tempter* himself, *instigating* *Evil*, and promoting the *Kingdom* of *Darkness*, and the *Destruction* of our *Fellow-Creatures*. In *Commending*, *Approving*, or *Defending* any *Crime*, we *Appropriate* it to ourselves, Transgress at second

cond hand, become the *Guardians* of Iniquity, and commence the Devil's *Champions*, to fight his *Battles*, and maintain his *Cause*, and represent him in the most detestable Quality of his Nature, a *Delight* in the *Dishonour* of God, and the *Misery*, and *Ruin* of Mankind. In *Giving Offence* by our Actions, we *use our Liberty for a Cloak of Maliciousness*, and make what would be otherwise *Innocent*, *Culpable*. By a *Scandalous Life*, and *Example*, we derive a Reproach upon our Holy Profession, and must answer for all those that are seduc'd by it's baleful, and infectious Influence.

By Instilling, or Propagating *Heterodox*, *Schismatical*, *Atheistical Factious*, or *Immoral Principles* into Others, we turn meer *Anti-Christians*, and *Emissaries of Hell*, and must answer for all the Souls that perish thro' our *Treachery*, *Guile*, or *Delusion*.

Give me now leave very Briefly, and by way of *Application* of this whole Discourse, to urge One or Two Particular Motives, to Deter us from falling under this great and dangerous Guilt of *Partaking in Other Men's Sins*.

1. The *First* may be drawn from the Consideration of that *heavy Burthen* of Guilt, which lies upon every Man's *own Conscience*, too Great to need the *Additional Weight of Others*. That in itself (God knows) is enough to *sink* us, without his *Infinite Mercy*, and the *All-atonning Merits* of our *Saviour*. Now if the *Malignity* but of the
least

least, single Transgression, without that, can consign us over to *Eternal Perdition*, if as the Scriptures, and our own wretched *Experience* convince us, that even a *Just Man* falls seven times a day, what a *Fearful Reckoning* is He like to make, who besides his own immense *Summ*, almost without *Number*, or *Bounds*, stands Chargeable for such a long, and frightful Catalogue of Other Men's Sins? Can he by any means (to use the Elegant Expression of the *Psalmist*) *Redeem his Brother*, or give to God a *Ransom* for his *Soul*, that he has thus plung'd into Misery, and seduc'd into *Ruin*? Can he be a *Mediator* for Another, that so much wants the *Intercession* of One for *Himself*? And if the *Righteous* can scarcely be sav'd, where shall this *Ungodly*, this *Over-grown*, this *Exorbitant Sinner*, laden with *Iniquity*, appear? Therefore,

2. Secondly, The vast *Extent*, and *Duration*, with the infinite, lamentable *Consequences*, of this *Method* of Sinning, should *Caution*, and *Deter* us from falling into it. All other Crimes lie under some *Limitation*; they are at an End, or *Die* with the Man: But here a Man's Sin *survives* his *Funeral*; and even when *he is Dead*, *he Sinneth*. He that *Propagates*, or *Publishes* any pernicious *Writings*, or *Tenets*, knows not how far their *Poyson* will reach, or where the *Deadly Contagion* will stop. It is an *Epidemical Evil*, a *National Calamity*, an *Everlasting Plague*, that has *slain it's Thousands*,

and it's ten *Thousands*, that in the hands of that *Destroying Angel*, the *Devil*, can taint whole Families, and Kingdoms, and transmit it's *Venom* down to Posterity, and continue *Spiritual Death* to the End of the World. How do those *Exe-
cralle Miscreants*, *Arrius*, and *Socinus*, the' so many Years *Rotten* in their Graves, still stink above Ground, and live agen in an Hellish *Trans-
migration* of their Damnable *Blasphemies*, and *He-
resies*! How do they now *Crucifie the Son of God afresh*, make him Die daily, and put him to an open, and continu'd *Shame*! How do those *Atheistical
Oracles of Reason*. Monsters, *Hobbes*, and *Spinoza*, in their Accursed *Rights of Books*, and *Proselytes*, still deny the God that made them, and anull the *Covenant*, whereby we are seal'd unto the day of *Redemption*! What a *Magazine* of Sin, what an *Inexhaustible Fund* of Debauchery, and Destruction, does any *Author* of *Heresie*, *Schism*, or *Immorality* set up! Which tho' perhaps they may appear at first as *Trifling*, and *Inconsi-
derable*, will like *Elisha's Cloud*, from being no bigger than a *Man's Hand*, gradually increase, till they fill the Heavens with *Darkness*, *Thunder*, and *Tempest*. Who would have thought, *Threescore Years ago*, that the *Romantick*, and silly *Enthusiasms*, of such an *Illiterate*, and *Scandalous Wretch* as *Fox*, should in the small Compafs even of our Memory gain such mighty Ground, *Capti-
vate* so many *Fools*, and Damn 'em with *Diaboli-
cal*

cal Inspiration, and Non-sensial Cant? Or to go higher, Who would have imagin'd that Two or Three *Jesuits* in *Masquerade* crept into a *Conventicle*, should sow those *Schismatical Seeds of Faction, and Rebellion*, that in a few Years should rise to that *Prodigious Degree*, as to be able to *grasp the Crown, contend with the Scepter, and not only Threaten, but Accomplish the Downfal both of Church and State?* But how were these *Numbers rais'd*, and this *Mischief* with such *amazing Success carry'd on?* Was it not by the many *Wild, Latitudinarian, Extravagant Opinions, and Bewitching False Doctrins, the Impudent Clamours, the Lying Misrepresentations, the Scandalous, and False Libels*, both upon the *King, and the Church*, that every Day were *Trumpeted* out of the *Pulpit, and the Press*, those *Mints of Atheism, and Irreligion*, that then *Poyson'd the Nation, and Besotted it into it's own Ruin?* And are not the *same Hands* at work agen, and the *same Villainous Methods* pursu'd? Were ever such *Outrageous Blasphemies* against *God, and all Religion, Natural, as well as Reveal'd*, vented *Publickly with Impunity, in any Christian Church, or Kingdom* in the whole World, as at present in our own? (be it spoken to our *Shame, and if not remedy'd to our Confusion) for if they fail of the same Effect, not to Embroil us agen in Blood, and Ruin, it can be owing to nothing but God's Infinite, but Unmerited Mercy, and Long-Suffering, that we are not utterly Consum'd.*

Lastly, This Manner of Sinning ought with a more peculiar Diligence to be avoided, because 'tis what without the *Super-Natural Assistance* of the *Divine Grace*, we can never *Repent of, and for which consequently we can never be Forgiven.* All Sins *intail Damnation upon the Offendor, but This almost with an inevitable Necessity.* For besides that before we can arrive to this *sad Degree of Impiety*, we mu st quite have *Extinguis'd the Light of our Consciences, and the Power of God's*

God's Spirit upon them, it happens, *First*, that we can have no thorough Knowledge of the Extent of this Sin, it being Communicated so *unsuspectedly*, and at such a *Distantce*. And, *Secondly*, that it is a *Crime*, for the *Injury* whereof we can never make *Reparation*, or *Restitution* to the Person *seduc'd* into it, and consequently obtain no *Compleat*, and *Acceptable Repentance* for it's *Guilt*. And tho' it could be suppos'd, that we should *Repent* of it *Ourselves*, yet the *Unhappy Persons* we have *Betray'd*, may be either so firmly *settled* in their *Errors*, as to be *incapable* of *Conviction*, or gon into an *Unchangeable State*, and so out of the *Reach* of being *Reclaim'd*. Certainly, if there be any Sin in the World, that does more *eminently* carry the *Image*, and *Superscription* of the Devil upon it, it is this, and what will infallibly inherit his severest *Punishments*. If there are *Different Degrees* of *Glory* in *Heaven*, as the *Apostle* tells us, and by *Analogy* we may conclude, that there are *different Degrees* of *Torment* in *Hell*, according to the *Size*, and *Quality* of the *Offendor*, no *Mansion* in that *Dismal Place* will be too Bad for such *Exessive*, and *Abominable Criminals*; where were they to meet with no other *Aggravation* to their *Misery*, but that of Beholding, and *Conversing* with so many *Wretched Objects*, whom they brought into that *Place of Torment*, it would heat the *Furnace* seven times hotter, add *Fury* to *Hell-Flames*, and a *Double Weight* to their *Damnation*. Now from this *Tremendous Sin*, which no *Good Man* can think of, without *Horror*, or speak of, without *Trembling*,

Good Lord Deliver Us.



F I N I S.

